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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving student organizational skills. The targeted population consisted of a fourth-grade self contained class, a sixth-grade science class, and a high school nine through twelve learning disability class in an elementary, middle, and high school setting. The schools were located in middle to upper class suburban communities in the Midwest. The deficiencies in organizational skills were documented with student, parent, and teacher surveys, and an organizational checklist. Analysis of probable causes indicated that many students of all ages lack organizational skills due to developmental factors, school structure, and parent involvement. The deficiencies of organizational skills adversely affected various situations, including student success. A review of the solution strategies suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in teaching students: time management skills, prioritizing, homework, study skills, organizing student materials in a desk, locker, backpack or trapper, and keeping an assignment notebook. The program included lessons in role playing, cooperative group activities, teacher modeling, problem solving activities, worksheets, self evaluation, checklists, and goal setting which were all incorporated into the curriculum. Post intervention information collected indicated an increase in student organizational skills such as keeping an organized desk, locker, backpack and assignment notebook. Students showed improvement in homework completion and class preparation. (Contains 26 references and 11 tables of data. Appendixes contain 3 survey instruments and a semantic web.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS IN THE CURRICULUM

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This report describes a program for improving student organizational skills. The targeted population consisted of a fourth grade self contained class, a sixth grade science class, and a high school nine through twelve learning disability class in an elementary, middle, and high school setting. The schools were located in middle to upper class suburban communities in the Midwest. The deficiencies in organizational skills were documented with student, parent, and teacher surveys, and an organizational checklist.

Analysis of probable causes indicated that many students of all ages lack organizational skills due to developmental factors, school structure, and parent involvement. The deficiencies of organizational skills adversely affected various situations, including student success.

A review of the solution strategies suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in teaching students: time management skills, prioritizing, homework, study skills, organizing student materials in a desk, locker, backpack or trapper, and keeping an assignment notebook. The program included lessons in role playing, cooperative group activities, teacher modeling, problem solving activities, worksheets, self evaluation, checklists, and goal setting which were all incorporated into the curriculum.

Post intervention information collected indicated an increase in student organizational skills such as keeping an organized desk, locker, backpack and assignment notebook. Students showed improvement in homework completion and class preparation.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted fourth grade elementary class, sixth grade science class, and the high school learning disability 9-12 class exhibit deficiencies in organizational skills, including an inability to keep an organized desk, locker, backpack, to complete an assignment notebook, or come prepared to class. Evidence for the existence of such a problem includes an organizational checklist, and teacher, parent, student surveys that document organizational problems.

Immediate Problem Context

Site A, an elementary school, Site B, a middle school, and Site C, a high school are all located within affluent suburban communities. Table 1 describes the student populations of all three sites. The student bodies are predominately white, with less than 15% consisting of black, hispanic, and other minority groups. Site A has a total enrollment of 635 students, Site B has 1,169 students, and Site C has 1,399 students (School Report Card, 1998).

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background of Students at Site A, B, and Site C

Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian P.Islander	Native American	Total Enrollment
Site A	80.0%	1.9%	8.0%	10.1%	0.0%	635
Site B	78.7%	5.4%	8.0%	7.7%	0.3%	1,169
Site C	91.6%	1.4%	1.6%	5.3%	0.0%	1,399

The percentages of low-income students in Sites A, B, and C are 4.7%, 6.25% and, 1.1% respectively. Low-income students are from "families receiving public aid" or "living in

institutions for neglected or delinquent children...." (School Report Card, 1998, p. 2). The percentages of limited-English proficient students who qualified for a bilingual program are as follows: Site A - 2.0%, Site B - 6.3%, and Site C - 0.3%.

Attendance patterns for Sites A, B, and C are summarized in Table 2. All three sites exhibit higher attendance rates, lower student mobility, and lower chronic truancy than state averages (School Report Card, 1998).

Table 2

Attendance, Mobility, and Chronic Truancy at Site A, Site B, and Site C

Location	Attendance	Student Mobility	Chronic Truancy
Site A	96.1%	8.3%	0.2%
Site B	96.1%	10.9%	0.0%
Site C	94.5%	3.2%	0.2%
State	93.9%	18.2%	2.3%

Of the 131 teachers at Site A, 86.3% are female and 13.7% are male. Of the 337 teachers at Site B, 87.3% are female and 12.7% are male. Finally, of the 106 teachers at Site C, 47.5% are female and 52.5% are male (School Report Card, 1998). Teachers in the districts of Site A, Site B, and Site C are predominately white (see Table 3).

Table 3

Teachers by Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender at Site A, Site B, and Site C

Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ P. Islander	Total Number
Site A	98.5%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	131
Site B	98.8%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	337
Site C	95.5%	1.9%	1.7%	0.9%	106

Over 15% of the teachers in all three districts have masters degrees or above (see Table 4). The pupil-teacher ratio in the districts of Site A , Site B, and Site C is 19.0:0, 18.3:1, and 14.5:1 respectively.

Table 4

Teacher Characteristics at Site A, Site B, and Site C

Location	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers with Bachelor's Degree	Teachers with Master's & Above	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Site A	10.5 Yrs.	83.3%	16.7%	19.0:1
Site B	8.7 Yrs.	59.1%	40.9%	18.3:1
Site C	16.9 Yrs.	22.3%	77.7%	14.5:1

Site A is part of a medium district consisting of three elementary schools and one middle school. The elementary school contains students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The one story structure has 21 regular education classrooms, five special service rooms, two gyms, one learning center, a music mobile, and an art room. There are two full time Kindergarten teachers, four- first, second, third and fourth grade teachers, and five fifth grade teachers. Special service teachers include a social worker, bilingual teacher, speech pathologist, two learning disability teachers, and a behavior disorder teacher. The school programs include language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, health, music, art, gifted education, learning disability resource, and student council. Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) is also taught at the fifth grade level. The parent teacher organization is a very strong component in the building.

Site B, a new Middle School that opened in August, 1997, serves grades six through eight. The three story structure has 80 regular classrooms, four gyms on the first level and two additional gyms on the second level, two computer labs, a Tech 2000 lab, exploratories such as, applied practical arts, health, foreign language, and life skills. Gifted programs are provided to identified students in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, and Creative Art. The core facilities

administrative area, health services, support services, gyms, library, and cafeteria have all been designed to service up to 3,000 students in anticipation of future enrollment. Site B is organized following the "school-within-a-school" concept, housing "houses" and "teams." Students are grouped in the building according to house, which is identified by color. Each house is composed of at least one team per grade level. The students switch for the core subjects of math, science, language arts, and social studies within their own team area. Site B provides many activities for the students to participate in after school. Activities include but are not limited to dance, drama, basketball, photography, magic- tricks, fencing, Spanish club, and Science club. Site B strives to provide a secure environment with many enrichment activities to aide the students in becoming well rounded, productive additions to society (School Report Card, 1998).

Site C is part of a medium district High School housing grades 9-12. Site C was originally built in 1935. Recently renovated, it now contains over 90 classrooms, two IBM computer labs, a Macintosh computer lab, fine arts facilities (including an auditorium and studio theater), a large gymnasium and Olympic-sized pool. Of the more than 170 course titles offered at Site C, most are considered college preparatory courses. Advanced Placement and honors level courses are also offered for academically gifted students. Juniors and Seniors have the opportunity to explore specific topics in depth through independent study programs. The special education program provides academic, social, and emotional support for qualified students. The school program continues to improve curriculum goals and objectives in order to exceed state standards with the surrounding communities support (School Report Card, 1998).

The Surrounding Community

Site A's school community as documented in Table 5, is predominately white, with an average household size of 2.96. Housing in this community is 20% multifamily and 80% single family. The average cost of a single family home in this area is $146,000, with an average income of $60,551.

Site B's overall district population has grown an estimated 54% since 1990. Site B's district population is mostly white, with hispanics comprising the largest minority group. The average family household size is 2.7, with an average income of approximately $52,000. The average cost of a single family home in this area is $160,000.

Site C's community is also predominately white, affluent, and suburban. The average single family home is valued from $303,977 to $475,000. The average family household size is 5.29, with an average income of $127,356.

Table 5

1995 Census Information on the Communities Served by Site A, Site B, and Site C

Community	Individuals	Families	Percent Caucasian	Median Family Income
Site A	14,472	3,866	92.2%	$ 52,446
Site B	35,271	8,368	93.65%	$ 52,308
Site C	22,000	6,382	96.0%	$127,356

All three school districts have tremendous parental support. Roughly 85% of the school families belong to parent-teacher associations. These organizations facilitate communication between home and school, initiate enrichment programs, and are active fund-raisers for school activities. At Sites A and B, a seven member board directs district-wide operations and programs. District philosophy for both Sites A and B include the implementation of Site-based management. The school boards believe that this approach by which parent, administration, and staff work together, best achieves district-wide educational goals. Site C is also directed by a seven member Board of Education. The board members host monthly lunch meetings with the faculty and participate in a joint committee with faculty and administrators in order to facilitate communication. Communication between parents, faculty and administration is essential in defining the national context of the problem.

National Context of the Problem

Organization can be defined as "to arrange or form into a coherent unity or functioning whole" (Webster, 1990). Organization not only includes putting things in order, but also involves "organizing materials, homework, long - term assignments, time - planning on a daily, weekly, monthly basis, and organizing study space" (Sedita, 1995, p. 3). Many times it seems like people forget that organization refers to so many things. Hatcher and Pond (1998) found:

> skills in organizing are an important component of critical thinking and are a prerequisite to independent thinking. In addition, students remember information more easily if it is organized rather than unorganized. Thus teaching organizational skills is important to student success, and standardizing these skills increases the likelihood that students will perceive themselves as good students who achieve academic success. (p. 715)

The issue of organization in the classroom has come to the forefront of national attention. Children who have difficulty organizing their things tend to "reverse order a sequence of steps, misplace personal belongings, forget to complete tasks, and exhibit day-to-day variability in remembering previously learned material" (Johnson & Morasky, 1977, p. 12). Study skills and organizational skills are essential components that have been neglected for far too long. Sedita (1995) has found that teachers need to spend time teaching organizational skills in class "many times students do not know what supplies they should bring for class, how to use an assignment pad, or to determine how long it will take to complete an assignment" (p. 4). Many times, the blame falls on the teachers and the schools. Teachers agree that study skills and organizational skills are important, but are not really sure who's responsibility it is to see that they are taught. Parents and business leaders continue to believe that students are not learning much of importance in school. Most of the parents polled agree that the nation's number one concern should be to improve our public schools (Fry, 1996). Parents are concerned that their children are not learning the basic organizational skills, study skills, reading, or writing skills they will need in their future. Fry (1996) states that since 1988, the following conditions have remained the same or gotten worse. Lack of organization and study skills have affected students in the United States. Most students are still scoring very low on SAT math and science tests in comparison to other countries.

The problem of organization is widespread. It can affect students in school, at home, and in their job. Organization is not only a "kid problem." Many adults also lack organizational skills and are affected by it. Businesses end up spending billions to train employees the basic skills they should have learned in school, such as organization, reading, writing, and math (Fry, 1996). "Learning how to organize your studying and your life is key to success now and in the future" (Fry,1996, p. 6). There is evidence that this problem exists at the three target Sites.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the deficiencies students exhibit in their organizational skills such as the inability to keep an organized desk, locker, or backpack, to complete an assignment notebook, or come prepared to class; teacher, parent, and student surveys were administered. Organizational checklists were also collected and analyzed.

Surveys

In September teachers at Sites A, B, and C, were given an organizational survey to be completed during the first week (Appendix A). Seventy teachers responded to the survey. Out of the 70 teachers surveyed at Sites A, B, and C, only 15.5 % of the the teachers responded that the students demonstrated organizational skills. Part of being organized includes coming prepared to class. The teacher survey indicated that only 6.6% of the students always come prepared to class. Teachers at Sites A, B, and C also responded that only 60.3% of the students often complete assignments on time.

Seventy-five parents were surveyed at the end of September. The surveys were sent home with the student and returned by the end of the week (Appendix B). At Sites A, B, and C, 63 parent surveys were returned. Of the surveys returned, 18.6% responded that their child always demonstrates organizational skills. When asked if a child sets up a schedule to complete long term assignments, 21.6% of the parents responded that their child always prepares a schedule. Of the parents that responded, 68.9 % stated that their child has school materials organized for the return to school.

At the beginning of the school year 63 students were surveyed (Appendix C). At Sites A, B, and C, students were given a survey to complete in their morning class. Each item was read and explained so that the students would understand what the questions were asking. Of the students

responding, 42.3% felt they are organized in school all the time. When asked if they always have the supplies needed for class, 33.3% responded that they did. The teacher, parent, student, survey results indicate that a problem exists in student organization. The checklists support this theory.

In order to document students lack of organizational skills a weekly tally of completed assignments was maintained throughout the intervention. This data was then compiled into a monthly percentage of homework completed and is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Homework Check List Information Site A, Site B, and Site C

Month	Site A	Site B	Site C
September	61%	75%	75%

Of the 63 students surveyed, students at Site A had the lowest percentage of students turning in their homework. Students at both Sites B and C were not completing their homework on time, but more frequently than students at Site A. Students failure to turn in assignments on time indicates a lack of organizational skills. Another problem that may affect homework completion is an unorganized desk or locker.

To identify that a problem exists students desks at Site A and lockers at Sites B, and C were checked weekly for disorganization of material, books and supplies. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Student locker & Desk Organization Check List Information Site A, Site B, and Site C

Month	Site A (Desk)	Site B (locker)	Site C (locker)
September	65%	61%	69%

According to the data collected, students desks at Site A and lockers at Sites B and C were very unorganized. The data at all three sites reflects a lack of organizational skills when keeping a

clean desk or locker. Lack of student organizational skills when keeping a clean desk or locker will inadvertently hurt the students academic success. In identifying the lack of students organizational skills various causes factor in, such as developmental factors, school structure and parent involvement.

Probable Causes

Students lack of organization cannot be connected to any one factor. It appears that many factors such as, developmental factors, school structure, and parent involvement all play a role in student's lack of organization. In order to find evidence to support the theory that an organizational problem exists at Sites A, B, and C surveys were administered to teachers, parents and students. Once a student is developmentally ready, organizational skills can be introduced.

Developmental Factors

Developmental factors that can affect a student's ability to be organized include attention issues, inability to process information, and lack of visual spatial memory. As Levine states, "any combination of these learning difficulties will affect a students ability to self design and independently apply organizational strategies. These students can learn organizational strategies, but they need specific instruction, practice, and teachers who understand their learning styles, strengths and weaknesses" (as cited in Sedita, 1995, p. 3).

Attention issues can greatly hinder a students ability to be organized. Students are unable to focus long enough to complete simple task such as filling out an assignment notebook, (89 % at Site A, 63% at Site B, and 34% at Site C complete an assignment notebook daily) putting materials in the correct folder or binder, or bringing the correct materials to class (Deshler, 1996). Only 60% of the students at Site A, 45% of the students at Site B, and 23% of the students at Site C keep notebooks and materials organized so they can find what they need easily. Students with attention issues often attend to irrelevant details and spend less time on the important aspects of the directions (Canter & Hausner, 1987).

According to M. Scrofani, a school psychologist at Site C, (personal communication, September 22, 1999) processing difficulties such as, memory, sequencing, and the ability to see part-whole relationships, can lead to deficits in organizational skills. A student with a memory deficit has difficulty remembering where they put materials, hand-outs, and assignments. They also may have difficulty processing auditory information. Students with weaknesses in

sequencing have a difficult time understanding cause and effect relationships. A student with a sequencing deficit will have a hard time organizing a large multi-step project. These students have an arduous time prioritizing tasks or organizing larger tasks. According to the student surveys given at Sites A, B, and C, only 26 out of the 63 surveyed have an organized plan for the order in which to do their assignments. A weakness in the ability to see part-whole relationships results in the student's inability to see the whole picture and therefore students are unable to break the task into smaller more manageable steps.

Students with visual spatial weaknesses may also experience difficulties when trying to get organized. Students with a visual spatial weakness more often are unorganized (Thomas,1993). Students are unable to see the end results of a task, and they can not visualize what is expected as indicated by M. Scrofani, a school psychologist at Site C (personal communication, September 22, 1999). Due to developmental factors such as, attention issues, processing difficulties, and visual spatial weaknesses, students can lack organization. Students with these deficiencies can have a difficult time getting organized and many times teachers don't recognize the need for teaching organizational skills. Schools and the teachers within it, should consider developmental factors when incorporating organizational skills into the school structure.

School Structure

Often times the school structure does not facilitate the concept of organization. Teacher knowledge, curriculum, and teacher modeling of organizational skills are not always incorporated into the school structure in order for students to practice and use organizational strategies in their daily lives.

Teacher's knowledge of organizational skills is a crucial component in getting students organized. It is important that students learn organizational skills early in their school career. Otherwise, a big gap between student study skills and school requirements can develop. "Busy teachers, lack of instructional study skills, and competition for grades: all these factors mean that you are on your own. Without help, you are stuck with your present level of organization. Organizational strategies have not been taught that often because teachers lack the training and some may feel uncomfortable teaching this skill" (McCormick, 1990, p. 54). According to Fry, (1996) "teachers agree that study skills and organizational skills are important but are not really sure whose responsibility it is to see that they are taught" (p. 6). Not only are teachers unclear

about who should be teaching organizational skills, these skills are often not included in the curriculum.

In the past, teachers have been expected to teach and focus on content areas, not organizational skills (Thomas, 1993). Teachers many times feel that "equally frustrating are the worthy but increasing intrusions - lessons in everything from AIDS awareness to self esteem to handgun safety - that a too busy society now expects it's schools to impart" (McCormick, 1990, p. 54). Vann (as cited in McCormick, 1990) "likens the process to pouring water to an already filled glass. Name one subject that has been dropped from the elementary schools in the 1980's, now, think about the subjects that have been added" (p. 58). Teachers, with too much to teach, often are forced to cut corners and bypass the basics like getting organized (McCormick, 1990). Student's in todays classrooms may be lacking many organizational strategies due to the lack of an organizational skills curriculum. Besides incorporating organizational skills into the curriculum, teachers need to model organizational skills daily.

Teachers often model how to structure and organize daily classroom activities. Teachers expect students to prioritize and schedule their daily activities in a timely manner. Yet, they often do not allow time for students to implement the strategies modeled. One crucial step in becoming organized is learning how to manage time. "Time management is an organizational skill that is a lifelong skill that some people never seem to master, going through life chronically missing deadlines and appointments and generally irritating those around them" (Thomas, 1993, p. 8). As Fry (1996) states, "Nearly all productivity problems can be traced to one or more of the following factors: no clear goals, lack of priorities and the inability to prioritize, no daily plan for assignments or homework, and personal disorganization" (p. 37). Without teacher guidance, many students are unable to develop or follow through with an organizational plan. "Students must make numerous decisions each day as they confront learning tasks in any subject area" (Hoover, 1990, p. 2). Out of the 63 students surveyed at Sites A,B, and C, only 46.6% responded that they follow a written plan to complete assignments; also only 29.3% students stated that they keep a schedule of study times and activities. These students do not have the skills necessary to finish the task or organize their academics. Learning effective time management skills in school will help students to be a more organized adult (Fry, 1996). The lack of time spent on teaching organizational skills in the classroom can lead to unorganized students. " It is easy to assume that students, especially in the

upper grades, have adequate organizational skills. Yet many students do not know what supplies they should bring to class, how to use an assignment pad, or how to determine how long it will take to complete an assignment" (Sedita, 1995, p. 4). Of the 63 students responding, 40.3% indicated that they complete and turn in assignments on time. Too many activities are crammed into a day, not leaving very much time for teachers to teach or model organization of material (McCormick, 1990).

After school, students are often busy with sports, clubs, and other academic responsibilities. According to Fry (1996), over commitment leads to activities often taking precedence over school assignments and responsibilities. Due to their lack of organization, students often have a hard time managing everything and usually end up stretching themselves too thin (Fry, 1996). " Trying to do everything - even when there is too much to do - without acquiring the skills to control your time, is an approach that will surely lead to burnout" (Fry, 1996, p. 20). The lack of teacher knowledge, over packed curriculum, and inadequate teacher modeling all contribute to the lack of organizational skills exhibited by the students. Teacher involvement, along with parental involvement is imperative if students are going to become more organized.

Parental Involvement

Parents lack of involvement in their child's academic life and in providing an adequate study environment can lead to student organizational problems. Parental involvement in a child's academic life plays a huge role in a student's success in school (Canter & Hausner, 1987). Parents extremely involved in their careers put their careers before the needs of their children (Mc Cormick, 1990). Without the support of parents in the home to help their child set up a schedule to do homework or to get organized, children will often experience a lack of organization. Only 38% of the parents surveyed at Sites A, B, and C help their child to set up a study schedule to review for tests, or complete long term projects such as book reports. Of the students surveyed, 30.6% said that they have a system for studying, 40.6% stated that they prepare ahead of time for topics studied in class and 20.6% study ahead of time for tests; with only 12.6% of them checking to make sure they have studied the correct information. " Home life is so clearly tied to school performance that seventy percent of the elementary principals now keep formal records of each child's family structure" (McCormick, 1990, p. 55). " Parents lives are so hectic that schools

often can't find them when problems arise" (McCormick, 1990, p. 55). In order for children to be organized and successful, parents need to be involved and model appropriate organizational skills in their own lives. " ...Without parental support, without encouragement, motivation, and discipline on the home front, children are almost certain to develop a negative attitude toward learning and school" (Canter & Hausner, 1987, p. 7).

Getting organized involves planning out long term assignments, studying for tests, and completion of daily assignments. Unfortunately, many times parents do not provide an adequate study environment for their child to do these things. Of the 63 students surveyed at Sites A, B, and C, 59.8% of them responded that they always have materials at home to get their work done, and 68.3% of them responded that they have a quiet area with good lighting to complete homework. Canter found children, "... simply cannot do their homework affectively in a distracting environment. They cannot do it in front of a TV set. They cannot do it while talking on the phone. They cannot do it if they are constantly being bothered by brothers and sisters" (1987, p. 15). Over 52% of the parents surveyed at Sites A, B, and C, when asked if their child had a comfortable, quiet place to study responded that they did not. Parents often do not realize the importance of providing their child with an adequate study area. Homework is not a priority in the home (McCormick, 1990). Many parents view homework as busy work. They dismiss the homework as unimportant. By doing this parents model that the homework assigned is not valuable (Canter, 1987). Organizing a study environment is essential in order for students to learn how to organize their space. Only 42 of the 63 students surveyed at Sites A, B, and C, have adequate supplies at home to complete their homework. Parents that are uninvolved in their child's academic life and do not provide the tools for their child to be successful are only adding to the problem of disorganization. However, there are solutions to implement in the classroom and at home that can improve student organizational skills.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The following topics for discussion have been found to be solutions for students who lack organizational skills: developmental strategies, school structure, and parent involvement. It is important that students are organized. Students need to be taught these organizational skills in a classroom setting.

Developmental Strategies

A solution to students acquiring organizational skills involves teacher awareness of organizational strategies needed to address the following developmental factors: attention issues, inability to process, and lack of visual spatial memory. Students with deficiencies in these developmental areas often have a difficult time with organizational skills (Fry, 1996). Teachers aware of factors interfering with the students ability to get organized can implement different organizational strategies in the classroom. These strategies will help the student organize and manage their time more effectively. According to Piaget , elementary and middle school students are in the concrete operations stage. They need to be taught organizational skills in order for students to know how to manage their time, take tests, take notes, prioritize, and apply study strategies (Rafoth & Leal, 1993). When implementing a plan to get organized it is important that the frequent use of self-evaluation is used (Wack, 1997). This allows the student to develop, monitor, increase the number of tasks, and to evaluate study skills and procedures. In doing this, students will become more focused, and the environment for learning academic knowledge and skills increase. Before beginning organizational skill strategy instruction, it is important for the student to complete a self evaluation of current study skills to help the student and teacher assess areas in need of improvement (Wack, 1997). The self evaluation survey consists of questions in nine categories: organization, learning style, communication, reading comprehension, note taking,

memorization, test taking, homework completion, and stress management. This self evaluation allows students the opportunity to analyze current organization and study skills strengths and weaknesses before instruction begins. Students can continue to evaluate their progress throughout the organizational strategy instruction. Once the organizational strategy instruction is complete, students will reevaluate their acquired skills by completing a self evaluation check list similar to the check list completed prior to instruction (Davis, Sirotowitz, & Parker, 1996).

When students can see a specific plan for their learning- and it is essential that they take part in making that plan - they will have then made the first step toward practicing good organizational strategies (Laase, 1996). According to Gall (1986), there are 13 strategies students need in order to organize their learning. These skills were designed to help a student with a deficiency in the following developmental factors: attention issues, inability to process, and a lack of visual spatial memory. The 13 skills needed to get organized are:

1. Spend some time on study each day so work does not pile up.
2. When given a study assignment, do some work on it right away.
3. Maintain continuity of study, so you do not lose the thread.
4. Break a big task into small, manageable tasks.
5. Set minimal goals for each study session.
6. Set reasonable standards for your initial efforts on an assignment.
7. Do something pleasurable after a study session, not before.
8. If you get stuck on an assignment, see a teacher, classmate, or tutor.
9. Schedule study sessions when you feel energy peaks.
10. Use relaxation techniques and exercise to put yourself in a positive mood for study.
11. Keep your materials accessible and organized.
12. Put loose papers in files, and create a index for them.
13. Set aside time each day for planning your studies (Gall, 1986, p 16).

The purpose behind Galls (1986) 13 steps is to get the student organized and ready to begin their studies. Gall (1986) believes that once the student sets up an organizational plan for studying the student will compensate for their weaknesses and continue to follow the plan.

Semantic webs are an organizational tool that can be used to teach strategies that will assist students who have deficiencies in attention issues, inability to process, and lack of visual spatial memory (Hoover & Rabideau, 1995). Time management, prioritizing, recording daily work and keeping track of work to be completed are skills that can be taught through semantic webbing (Hoover & Rabideau, 1995). Semantic webs are diagrams developed by students and teachers portraying specific topics or concepts. This strategy stimulates student thinking by encouraging the student to combine new knowledge with information they learned previously. Semantic webbing of specific organizational skills allows students to build upon prior knowledge and experiences of organizational skills no matter how inexperienced they may be with using organizational skills in the classroom (Hoover & Rabideau, 1995). Once an organizational skill topic has been selected, the students can begin the semantic web activity. When conducting semantic web activities the teacher should follow the seven steps based on the work of Hoover and Rabideau (1995) (See Appendix D). First, explain the webbing strategy and how it will help students organize information for future use - webbing strategies helps students to organize information such as time management skills. Second, assist students in developing a skeleton semantic web or provide one. Third, allow students to share specific examples of when the students have used organizational skills and make a list of the responses. This helps students to evaluate self organizational skills. Fourth, allow the students to develop the webs in cooperative groups which helps students to learn and share organizational strategies. Fifth, encourage all students to share in the semantic web, emphasizing the importance of each contribution. Finally, have the students develop a semantic web notebook for easy use, and as a reference.

Mnemonic strategies "are organizational or elaborative techniques used to improve retention" (Heaton & Oshea, 1995, p. 35). Guidelines teachers can use when developing mnemonic reminders for students are: **T**arget a setting demand - choose a setting, **A**rrive at the strategy steps -plan the steps to follow, **C**reate a remembering system, **T**ranslate for learning, **Integrate** with teaching steps - implement into your classroom, **C**ontinue development through use - reinforce through practice (**TACTIC**) (Lombardi, 1995). Mnemonic devices can be created by teachers or students to assist students in remembering classroom procedures such as: keeping a clean desk or organizing their work. After the students have created these devices it is important that they are assessable and easy to use. It is recommended that the students review these strategies

periodically until they become habit.

Other organizational strategies such as, effective time management and prioritizing provides students with a greater sense of ownership and control over their own lives while also meeting academic, social, and personal demands (Hoover, 1990). Time management activities can be included in daily lessons by teaching students to understand time concepts, prioritizing activities, estimating time, and using a calendar. The key steps required to develop an effective time management system in the classroom include: identifying tasks to complete; prioritize tasks or goals; work towards meeting the time lines established; review projected time lines; and adjust future time management schedules based on past performance (Hoover, 1990). These strategies should be part of a classroom routine that is reviewed and revised as needed. Goal setting is another organizational skill that should be included in daily lessons. Goal setting and prioritizing can be done by doing activities based on critical thinking, setting goals, sequencing, and planning of daily activities. After students gain organizational strategies, implementing study skills will increase a students ability to learn and recall information (Coman, & Heavers, 1998).

So many times people think learning is natural and to some extent it is (Schumm, Radencich, 1992). When in a school setting so much knowledge and information is presented that students need to know how to organize the information and retain it, this doesn't always happen naturally (Ohme, 1986).

Learning organizational skills involves teaching the students to ask questions, take responsibilities for actions, ask for help, handle stress, develop a positive attitude, and understand motivation (Soper, 1993). When teachers have an awareness of organizational skill deficiencies caused by developmental factors they can implement a plan for the school structure.

School Structure

The school structure must facilitate the concept of organization (Rafferty, 1989). Teacher knowledge, curriculum, and teacher modeling should be incorporated into the school structure in order for students to practice and use organizational strategies in their daily lives.

Teaching organizational skills, such as study skills training, can benefit students academically through improvement in exam performance, better grades and increased self confidence (Stephens, 1990). Initially, teachers should spend time teaching students study skills. By teaching organization and study skills, ideally less time will be spent lecturing about how to

study and be organized (Greenspan, 1984). Most students who receive training in organizational skills during their years in school will develop skills especially useful in coping with the wide variety of learning situations that they will encounter throughout their lives (Thomas, 1993). "Students are developmentally ready to use strategies and monitor their learning at a time when the curriculum begins to demand greater organizational skills, more mastery of factual material, and greater responsibility for comprehension of and monitoring of learning" (Rafoth, & Leal 1993, p. 53). Every year it gets harder and harder for people to sort through and organize the amount of information available through advances in technology. Students who have learned how to learn- and organize their time - will be the ones who can process this information and use it in school, the world of work, and personal life (Thomas, 1993). Skills in organizing are an important component to critical thinking and are a prerequisite to independent thinking (Hatcher & Pond, 1998). In addition, students remember information more easily if it is organized in a meaningful plan. Thus, teaching organization skills is important to student success, and standardizing these skills increases the likelihood that students will perceive themselves as good students who achieve academic success (Hatcher & Pond, 1998). So often students are eager to learn organizational skills but, that eagerness has usually diminished by the time students enter high school. If that is the case, the early grades may indeed be the best time to emphasize organizational skills that can then be carried into high school (Lenz, Ellis & Scanlon, 1996).

Teachers need to model how to structure and organize daily activities. The Landmarck Study Skills Model (1995) is a model that teachers can use in the classroom to teach students how to set up notes and materials, use assignment notebooks, and develop a calendar whether it be weekly or monthly. At the beginning of the school year, teachers need to present how to use an assignment notebook and how to keep a clean desk, locker, backpack, and/or trapper. Teachers should model the use of calendars, assignment notebooks and homework sheets on a daily basis. Things that are done in the classroom should be clearly explained and organized to avoid confusion about class requirements. According to the LLS method, which provides a structured plan for home and school work, teachers need to help students independently apply organizational skills by explaining why the skill is needed. It is important that organization be treated as part of the regular curriculum. Expectations need to be clearly stated and modeled when having the students apply organizational strategies. Teachers should monitor the students to make sure they are meeting the

expectations (Sedita, 1995). To improve the students organizational skills both the teacher and the parent need to communicate. Weekly or monthly newsletters containing important due dates, activities, and helpful organizational tips can be used by the parents as a resource to increase awareness of school structure. Homework hotline can also be used as a tool to increase student / parent communication when implementing a study plan. To improve student organizational skills, both the teacher and the parent need to model and reinforce the use of the students organizational plan. Parent involvement is key to the success of the organizational plan being implemented by the school and student.

Parent Involvement

Parents who are involved in their child's academic life provide an adequate study environment and model appropriate organizational skills; demonstrating a positive attitude toward learning and school (Georgiady & Romano, 1994).

In order for students to be successful in school, it is essential that the parents are involved. "Surprisingly enough, the results of every study done in the last two decades about what affects a child's success in school clearly demonstrate, that only one factor overwhelmingly affects it, every time: parental involvement" (Fry, 1996, p. 10). Parents can help create an organized study environment free from distractions such as: radio or t.v. and free from interference of family members and friends. Some helpful tips for parents to follow include: appropriate study area free from distraction, good lighting, check child's assignment notebook or homework hotline, set a study time routine, and lastly make sure your child has the needed materials to complete work (Schumm, Radencich, 1992). It is essential that parents realize the importance of homework. Homework is a daily opportunity that parents can use as an excuse to have a positive impact on their children's education and future (Canter & Hausner, 1987). Organizing and turning in homework is an area in which parental guidance is needed. Homework can make up a large portion of a student's grade. Turning in homework has been proven to be a powerful tool for ensuring student success in school (Canter & Hausner, 1987). A homework policy should be instated and provided for the parents so they are aware of classroom requirements, along with a helpful HOMEWORK acronym which provides a guide for the parent when their child is completing assignments. With these elements in place at home, the student will be able to develop good organizational strategies such as, study skills.

Parents that model organizational strategies at home will teach their child the importance of organization. According to Canter (1994), parents continually teach their children how to do this or that, yet parents often don't teach them some of the basic organizational strategies that can mean the difference between success and failure. "These skills don't come naturally. They must be taught and practiced" (Canter, 1994, p. 11).

According to the surveys distributed to the parents, students, and teachers there is a definite need for organizational skill instruction in the classroom and at home. The mentioned strategies are suggestions which focus on the primary organizational skills needed to increase students organization. The strategies were selected based on the research findings of other organizational strategy specialists. Student organizational skills will increase if the teacher is able to develop activities that foster the following strategies: organization of materials and homework, and incorporation of organizational skills into the curriculum such as time management, prioritizing, and modeling of effective organizational skills.

Project Objective and Process

As a result of teaching organizational skills through cooperative learning, and modeling during September, 1999 through December, 1999, the fourth grade self-contained class, sixth grade science class, and high school nine through twelve learning disability class will increase their organizational skills. This will be measured by teacher checklists, and parent, teacher, and student surveys. In order to increase students organizational skills, the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop cooperative learning activities that will foster organization of materials and homework.
2. The implementation of lessons incorporating organizational skills into the curriculum.
3. Create activities that model effective organizational skills.

Project Action Plan

This action plan describes a program for improving student organizational skills. The targeted population consists of a fourth grade self contained class, a sixth grade 50 minute science class, and a 50 minute high school nine through twelve learning disability class in an elementary, middle, and high school.

Develop and Implement tools and Procedures that Promote Organizational Skills. (In September):

A. Administer student, parent, and teacher surveys to provide base line data

B. Create cooperative homework base groups (Site A)

C. Teacher modeling of organizational skills

1. Set up classroom routine (45 minutes during week one)

a. Establish assignment notebook

1. Daily student / teacher assignment notebook check

2. Student incentive for using the assignment notebook

b. Homework policy

1. Individual policy created by each teacher

2. Provided by teacher for parent to read and sign

c. Model organizational techniques in the area of: lockers, back packs, desks, and trappers

2. Use acronym PREPARE and NEAT (week two for ten minutes)

D. Parent Contact (October)

1. Weekly or monthly newsletter

a. Describing monthly activities

b. Important due dates

c. Defining the organizational routines used in the classroom

1. Teacher directed review of previously learned organizational techniques (20 minutes)

d. homework environment

1. Students need a quiet, comfortable place to study

2. All necessary materials available

3. Study area should be well lit

4. Use prioritized time management schedule

5. December newsletter will include parent acronym

HOMEWORK

2. Parent postcards (as needed)

a. Positive reinforcement for using organizational skills in the classroom

b. Positive reinforcement for organized and completed homework

E. Time Management (November)

1. Brainstorm time management (15 minutes)

2. In cooperative groups read a short scenario, evaluate the time management strategies and discuss better ways to effectively manage time. (30 minutes)

3. As a class, discuss ways to manage time in an effective way

4. Project - students will keep track of all daily activities for one week

a. Upon completion the students will self reflect their time management techniques (10 minutes)

b. Using PMI reflect on time management strategies (15 minutes)

c. Individually, students revise previous weeks schedule

d. Students will share their schedules in a cooperative group

5. Time Management schedules

a. Every Friday the students will set up next weeks schedule (10 minutes)

b. Every Monday students will self reflect the effectiveness of the previous weeks schedule using the fist to five strategy (5 minutes)

F. Prioritizing (December)

1. In cooperative groups, students prioritize a list of items needed if stranded on an island (20 minutes)

a. Cooperative groups share their prioritized lists (15 minutes)

b. Students share prioritizing methods with the class (20 minutes)

2. Students role play prioritizing scenarios (30 minutes)
   a. Individually students write role plays drawing from past experiences (20 minutes)
   b. Student pairs up with another student and role play (40 minutes)
   c. Class discussion evaluating positive and negative aspects of how the scenarios were prioritized (20 minutes)
3. Prioritize your activities
   a. Using their time managements schedule, students will prioritize the evenings activities (15 minutes)
   b. The following day students will write a journal reflection on the effectiveness of their prioritized evening (10 minutes)
   c. For the rest of the school year the students will prioritize activities or assignment using the number system checked weekly.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the organizational skills interventions, students and parents, will retake the organizational skills survey. The results will be tallied and compared to the pretest survey results. The teachers will assess organizational skills by evaluating the teacher checklists kept throughout the research collection period.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase student organizational skills. The implementation of cooperative learning activities to foster organization of materials and homework was selected to effect the desired change. Teacher modeling and integration of organizational skills into curricular areas were used to meet organizational plan objectives.

The students of the targeted fourth grade elementary class, sixth grade science class, and the high school learning disability 9-12 class observed teacher modeling of organizational skills throughout the program. To establish a baseline student, parent, and teacher surveys were given to determine organizational skill practices of the targeted students. Teachers at all three sites documented in their journals that they spent time explaining the survey's questions and vocabulary to ensure the students had a general understanding of the survey. However, documentation was noted that some students took more time than others to complete the survey. The teachers at Sites A, B, and C spent the first week of school establishing a classroom routine which included the use of assignment notebook, implementing a homework policy, and modeling organizational techniques in the area of: lockers, backpacks, desks, and trappers. Students at Site A were taught how to use the entrance and exit slip system as a way to fill in their assignment notebooks. At the end of each day, students were given 15 minutes to fill in the assignment notebook and entrance and exit slip. The homework assignments were posted on the homework board. Each table team worked to help each other fill in the assignment notebook correctly by looking at the homework board. Each table had an assigned member who completed the entrance and exit slip. The entrance and exit slip had all the table members names, a column with the days of the week, and a letter system. The entrance and exit captain checked that all of the table members recorded the assignments correctly in their assignment notebook.

Once they recorded the information correctly, the captain signed their assignment notebook and wrote the letter R on the entrance and exit slip to show that all team members recorded their homework. After the entire table was ready, the teacher signed off on the assignment notebooks. Tables received table points for working as a team and filling in the assignment notebooks and entrance and exit slips. At the end of the week, entrance and exit slips were collected for data collection. It was at that time that a new table captain was assigned. The table with the most points won a popcorn party.

A homework policy was provided and implemented in the first week of school. Students were given a homework policy that was discussed in class. The homework policy went home and required a parent's signature. At Open House, the homework policy was discussed. When a student came to school without the previous days homework, they missed their recess and completed the homework at that time. After three consecutive days of missing homework, the parents received a phone call or letter home from the teacher. Team captains recorded each morning on the entrance and exit slip whether or not the homework was completed or missing. This was also used as part of the data collection.

At the beginning of the school year, students were shown how to organize their materials and arrange the materials in their desk. Each Friday desks were checked, and a record was kept noting if the student's desk was clean or messy. This information was used as part of the data collection. Time was given every Friday to clean desks and organize student folders.

Students at Site B were taught by a team of teachers who agreed to follow the organizational plan to benefit all students. Data collected for the organizational project was a depiction of one researchers homeroom. Students learned how to set up and utilize an assignment notebook that was checked daily and recorded weekly by a student or teacher. Assignment notebooks were checked at the end of the day and homework was reviewed. In order to make the assignment notebook meaningful, students were given free hall passes that were recorded in their assignment notebook. Parents of certain students requested the assignment notebook be filled out daily and signed by the teachers. These students received a positive incentive from home.
All students were expected to not only write the homework in their assignment notebook, but also document the days activities.

A homework policy was provided for the parent and students to read and sign. No late work was accepted without penalty. For each late assignment, the score was reduced by 25% of the value for the first day late, and by 50% for the second and subsequent days. Two weeks before the end of the grading period, students who had completed all their work were given a reward such as a movie or positive parent postcards were sent home. Those students who were missing work reported to a classroom to complete unfinished assignments.

To assist students in keeping a neat trapper and locker, weekly checks were done to ensure that they were organized and clean. Students were encouraged to place one folder and notebook per class in their trapper. To help the students become more organized, participating teachers posted a list of materials outside their classroom. This list could be updated depending on what materials were required for class that day. Supply lists were sent home each month for parent signatures to ensure that the students had all their materials.

Students at Site C were taught how to set up and utilize an assignment notebook that was checked and recorded daily during their time in the Learning Resource Center. All students were expected to set up an individual study plan depending on the student's academic needs. Students were given incentives such as candy and a pizza party for following their study plan and having a completed assignment notebook.

Homework policies at Site C were individual agreements created by the teacher, the student, and the parent. This was different from Sites A and B because of the class structure. In the Learning Resource, center grade update and reports were received from the academic teachers. These reports indicated missing homework assignments. Students who had missing work were expected to stay in the extended day program to complete unfinished homework. In the Developmental English class, students with missing homework either met with the teacher during lunch or a resource period and/or they attended the extended day program. Those students who completed a majority of their homework received a positive parent postcard.

At the beginning of the year, students were taught how to set up and organize their binder. This included developing an appropriate section for notes, handouts and homework. Organization of the students backpack included reminders to ensure that the appropriate books and materials got from school to home and vice versa. Binder, backpack, and locker checks were conducted weekly for neatness, and reorganized if necessary.

Parent contact at Sites A, B, and C was implemented in October. A monthly newsletter describing school activities and important due dates was sent home to increase parent awareness and student organization. Included in the newsletter were many of the organizational routines used in the classroom. The December newsletter included a parent acronym HOMEWORK which described methods to help students complete their assignments.

During the month of November at Sites A, B, and C, the researchers focused on time management skills. The unit consisted of brainstorming time management methods, and cooperative group activities to evaluate and discuss time management strategies. Each class discussed ways to manage time in an effective manner. As a final project, students kept track of daily activities for one week. Upon completion, they wrote a self reflection of their time managements strategies utilized. According to the action plan, every Friday the students were to set up next weeks schedule and write a follow up reflection. Unfortunately, due to time constraints this was impossible and unnecessary. It was determined that there was a greater need for these strategies to be implemented for long term assignment planning.

Throughout the month of December, the focus was on prioritizing. In cooperative groups, students prioritized a list of items needed if stranded on an island. As a class, the groups shared their results and prioritizing strategies. This activity was used as a tool to demonstrate the importance of prioritizing students time and activities. Role plays were also implemented to emphasize the importance of prioritizing. Later in the month, students used their time management skills to prioritize evening activities. The following day, students were asked to reflect on their methods of prioritizing. For the remainder of the school year, students were required to prioritize activities and assignments as a way to maintain organizational skills. After implementing all of these strategies data was reviewed and analyzed.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to determine the effects of the organizational skills interventions, students were administered an organizational skills post-survey. The results were tallied and compared to the pre-survey data results. The teachers assessed organizational skills by evaluating the teacher checklists kept throughout the research collection period.

Surveys

In order to assess the effects of the organizational program, a post-survey was given to students upon completion, and it was compared to the results of the initial pre-survey. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results reflect an increase in the students organizational skills. This data was then compiled into percentages and is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Comparison of Pre/Post - Surveys

Students organizational Skill response at Sites: Do I:	Pre - Survey Always	Post - Survey Always
Site A		
feel I am organized at school?	42%	48%
have the supplies I need for school?	78%	78%
schedule my study times and activities?	42%	35%
turn in my assignments on time?	42%	43%
Site B		
feel I am organized at school?	53%	85%
have the supplies I need for school?	64%	91%
schedule my study times and activities?	24%	44%
turn in my assignments on time?	42%	67%
Site C		
feel I am organized at school?	32%	83%
have the supplies I need for school?	60%	67%
schedule my study times and activities?	22%	56%
turn in my assignments on time?	37%	70%

The pre and post test survey results at Site A showed little variability. The table indicates an increase in students feeling that they are organized in school and a decrease in students scheduling

of study times and activities.

The results at Site B are different. Many of the pre-test scores that were given at the beginning of the year were low. After interventions were in place and the second post-test was given, the students at Site B scored higher on the post-test survey.

The results at Site C increased substantially. The greatest improvement was in the area of turning assignments in on time, which demonstrated students becoming more organized. Overall, the implemented interventions had a positive effect at all three sites. Data was also collected and analyzed for homework completion.

Student Checklists

In order to assess the effect of organizational strategies on student behavior, a weekly tally of completed assignments was maintained throughout the intervention. This data was then compiled into a monthly percentage of homework completed and is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Student Homework Check List Information Site A, Site B, and Site C

Month	September	October	November	December
Site A	61%	66%	92%	95%
Site B	75%	83%	84%	90%
Site C	75%	81%	87%	91%

Site A demonstrated the greatest improvement of homework completion at 11.3%. Site B increased 5% and Site C increased 5.3%. All sites showed great improvements in the area of homework completion once the organizational skills plan was implemented.

In order to assess the effects of checking the students desks at Site A and lockers at Sites B, and C, a checklist was compiled weekly and then into a monthly percentage to reflect the number of students practicing the organizational skills they had been taught. The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Student locker & Desk Organization Check List Information Site A, Site B, and Site C

Month	September	October	November	December
Site A (desk)	65%	79%	85%	95%
Site B (locker)	61%	66%	80%	84%
Site C (locker)	69%	83%	86%	90%

The organization of desks at Site A increased an average of 13.3% per month and lockers at Site B, 7.7% per month and an average of 7% per month at Site C. Based on the results many conclusions and recommendations can be made to increase student organizational skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the researchers felt the program was a success. A majority of the students improved organizational skills. The teaching of organizational strategies such as, time management, prioritizing, and study skills increased the students ability and awareness to organize their time, activities, and daily school work.

Teacher modeling and establishment of routines was a crucial component which helped students to modify or improve their organization. Students admired the routine ordained by teachers at Sites A, B, and C. Daily objectives were written on the board, homework boards and calenders were updated, homework hot lines were also available. As part of the established routine, all sites used homework incentives which worked in increasing homework completion. Site A used entrance and exit slips. Students at Sites B and C commented that the extra time given after school to complete homework provided additional structure to finish assignments.

The implemented organizational plan, although successful didn't take into account the students varied age levels or environmental conditions. The fourth grade students at Site A, completed a schedule prioritizing their after school activities. Unfortunately, due to the the age of the students and the classroom environment, prioritizing wasn't as critical because after school activities were not offered. Students at Site B showed a lack of organization. Being unfamiliar with the middle school environment caused many of the students to score low on the pre-survey. Keeping a locker, having four core teachers, and diverse teacher expectations, in addition to being in a new school made for a difficult adjustment period. Starting the month of September

organizational methods were implemented to increase the students' organization and to help them adjust to the middle school. High school students at Site C, originally, because of their age, appreciated the time to clean out and organize their lockers. Once the students at Site C realized their lockers would be checked weekly, a majority of the students kept lockers cleaned and organized to avoid teacher assistance.

In general, teaching students organizational strategies empowered them to become more organized students. The research results indicate a need for organizational strategy instruction. As a result of the findings, researchers recommend strategies that can be implemented in the teaching of organization.

Recommendations

The researchers involved in this organizational program believe that all students need to be taught organizational skills. Organizational instructions need to be introduced and implemented at a young age. Organizational skills need to become an intrigal part of the curriculum throughout a students' academic career. Curriculum guides need to include an organizational component, and materials should be readily available for all staff to access. Organization can be taught within the subject areas, often extra time will be needed. Teachers need to be aware that students aren't naturally organized. Routines and teacher modeling are imperative. Schools need to provide time for staff development. This is crucial to the success of an organizational program.

The main objective of this program was to improve students of the targeted fourth grade elementary class, sixth grade science class, and the high school learning disability students capability to keep an organized desk, locker, or backpack, to complete an assignment notebook, or come prepared to class. Specifically taught organizational strategies and increased parent involvement were implemented in order to achieve this goal. This particular plan appeared to have a positive impact on the targeted group. After reviewing the research, the issue of organization in the classroom has come to the forefront of national attention. Students are not naturally organized. Teachers must provide the structure and routines to foster student organization and academic success. After establishing classroom routines, the teacher must consistently follow the established plan. A key element to the students organizational success is parent involvement. Parent involvement played a significant role in the success of this program because parents were aware of the school structure and the organizational skills being implemented. An area for future study

would focus an consistent and constant contact with parents to keep them involved in their child's education and documentation such as a checklist would be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of parent involvement. Parents need to be aware of class expectations and foster a positive learning environment. The researchers found that even though the organizational program takes time and effort to implement, it is essential for the students who are not naturally organized. In summation, organizational strategy instruction in the targeted groups needs to be a necessary part of the curriculum. Therefore, to effectively address this problem, it is crucial that educators be flexible and innovative in their approach to incorporating organizational skills into the already established school curriculum.

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APPENDIX A
TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher Name_____
Grade Taught_____
Subject Area_____

Teacher Survey
Organizational Skill Survey

Please complete this survey by checking the box that best describes your student's organizational skills. Please return this survey by:_____

	Always 1	Sometimes 2	Seldom 3	Never 4
My Students:				
demonstrate organizational skills.	❑	❑	❑	❑
come prepared for class.	❑	❑	❑	❑
have difficulty keeping track of completed work as well as work still in progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑
keep an assignment notebook.	❑	❑	❑	❑
set up a study schedule to complete long term projects such as book reports.	❑	❑	❑	❑
review notes even when not required.	❑	❑	❑	❑
turn in completed assignments.	❑	❑	❑	❑
properly follow directions on assignments.	❑	❑	❑	❑
keep their supplies in order.	❑	❑	❑	❑
complete tasks on time.	❑	❑	❑	❑
have school materials organized such as, desks, lockers, or binders.	❑	❑	❑	❑

Below, Please list any organizational strategies you use with your students.

_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX B
PARENT SURVEY

Student Name_____

Parent Survey
Organizational Skill Survey

Please complete this survey by checking the box that best describes your student's organizational skills. Be sure to send this survey back to your child's teacher by:_____

	Always 1	Sometimes 2	Seldom 3	Never 4
My Student:				
demonstrates organizational skills.	❑	❑	❑	❑
has a quiet, comfortable place to study.	❑	❑	❑	❑
has supplies at home to complete work.	❑	❑	❑	❑
has a set time to study.	❑	❑	❑	❑
takes short-scheduled breaks.	❑	❑	❑	❑
sets up a study schedule to complete long term projects such as book reports.	❑	❑	❑	❑
reviews notes even when not required.	❑	❑	❑	❑
turns in completed assignments.	❑	❑	❑	❑
properly follows directions on assignments.	❑	❑	❑	❑
keeps supplies in order.	❑	❑	❑	❑
completes tasks on time.	❑	❑	❑	❑
has school materials organized for return to school.	❑	❑	❑	❑

Below, please list any other organizational strategies you or your student use to complete school work.

_____

_____

APPENDIX C
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS SURVEY

Name_____

Organizational Skill Survey

Show how organized you are by completing this survey. Check the box that best describes you . Read each question. If you **always** do what is asked check **"1"; sometimes** do what is asked check **"2"; seldom** do what is asked **check "3"; never** do what is asked check**"4".**

What does being "organized" mean to you?

_____

_____

_____

	Always 1	Sometimes 2	Seldom 3	Never 4
* Do I feel I am organized in school?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I have all the supplies I need for school?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I keep my notebooks and materials organized so I can easily find what I need?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I keep a schedule of study times and activities?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I write my assignments in an assignment notebook?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I have an organized plan for the order I do my assignments?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I keep and follow a written plan to complete long-term assignments?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I complete and turn in my assignments on time?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I keep track of my grades on a weekly basis?	❑	❑	❑	❑

Organizational Skills Survey Cont.

	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
	1	2	3	4
* Do I have all the materials I need at home to get my work done?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I have a quiet area with good lighting where I can do my homework?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I have a system for studying?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* When I study do I concentrate on what I am doing?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I prepare ahead of time for the topics we are studying in class?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I study ahead of time for tests ?	❑	❑	❑	❑
* Do I check to make sure I have studied the correct information?	❑	❑	❑	❑

How can you improve your organizational skills?

_____

_____

What sort of after school activities are you involved in?

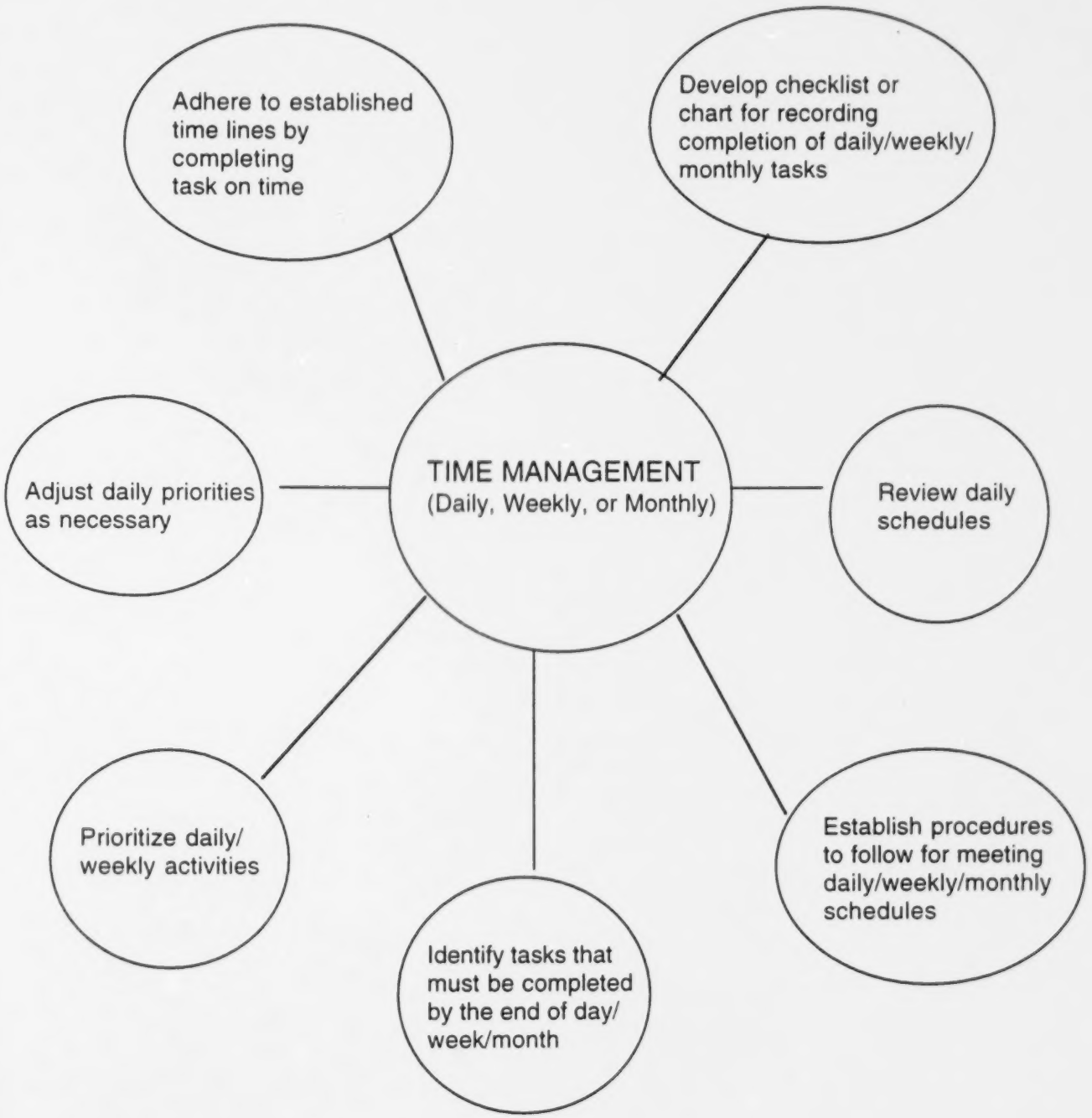
_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D
SEMANTIC WEB

SEMANTIC WEB


Adhere to established time lines by completing task on time
Develop checklist or chart for recording completion of daily/weekly/ monthly tasks
Adjust daily priorities as necessary
TIME MANAGEMENT
(Daily, Weekly, or Monthly)
Review daily schedules
Prioritize daily/ weekly activities
Identify tasks that must be completed by the end of day/ week/month
Establish procedures to follow for meeting daily/weekly/monthly schedules